

The District 3 Slate

March 2003

County Supervisor Pam Slater

"But does the lack of confidence in Sacramento carry over to local government? I don't believe so!"



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Pam Slater

Every hour we sit in traffic wears at us. The Automotive Club of Southern California has quantified the costs of gridlock on a motorist:

- \$2,510 in lost time for the average 136 hours trapped in our vehicles.
- 260 gallons of wasted fuel.

Now a University of California, Irvine professor has released the results of his study on the emotional costs of gridlock. They include higher blood pressure and lower tolerance for frustration combined with reduced cognitive efficiency.

These are the costs families and companies factor in when deciding whether to live and work in San Diego County. These are the reasons why we need to promote alternative transit choices while improving our road systems. This is our challenge.

Pam Slater

Declaring War On Graffiti

New Technology Takes On Taggers

You see it everywhere. On store fronts in Encinitas and Escondido; on public property in Carmel Valley and in Mira Mesa. "It" is graffiti - either spray-painted, etched or written - and it is defacing our communities and costing merchants thousands of dollars to clean up walls or replace windows.

This illegal behavior is costly and unsightly, and it is time to strike back against graffiti. I recently met with law enforcement officials and leaders from Escondido's city government and business community to address the problem of graffiti in that city and witness the demonstration of an anti-graffiti technology.

Developed by Traptec, an Escondido-based company, Taggertrap notifies police and property owners when a graffiti attack is taking place through a sophisticated array of sensors. These sensors detect the aerosol spray and, when combined with video and motion sensors, provide a comprehensive approach to fighting graffiti.

Most law-abiding citizens cannot pass a wall, building or sign defaced by graffiti without feeling anger. The act of graffiti is not art or youthful exuberance. It is a direct attack on a community's right to live in an environment free of crime and harassment. It is an assault on an individual's right to have and keep property.

This technology proves a point: Local problems like graffiti can best be solved by involving local law en-

forcement, local leaders and inventive local entrepreneurs.

Taggertrap has been tested at several locations in Escondido and in the City of San Diego.

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates graffiti costs businesses and homeowners across the country \$12 billion annually. In 2001, more than 1,350 individuals in San Diego



County were arrested on misdemeanor charges of vandalism and graffiti.

The City of San Diego last year spent \$1.5 million to clear away graffiti. Escondido's cost was \$150,000. In today's tight economic times, municipalities cannot afford to take money away from more vital programs to pay for property destruction.

The County of San Diego recently launched an abatement program that requires graffiti on public and private property to be painted over if it is deemed a public nuisance. This ordinance applies to the unincorporated portions of the county. In addition, the Board of Supervisors recently gave its support to a county ordinance I crafted to regulate the sale of acid baths and creams that are used to deface storefront windows, causing irreparable damage.

Those living in the unincorporated county should report graffiti to the Code Enforcement Division at (760) 940-2893 (North County) or (619) 441-4264 (East County).

Good News, Bad News: Putting It In Perspective

Do you trust government? A statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California ("Californians and Their Government") validates the brewing anger toward state office holders due to the miscondition of the state's finances.

According to this survey, people want their elected officials to be accountable. Both conservatives (71%) and liberals (54%) expressed disapproval with how state finances and the deficit are being handled.

This is good news for those of us at the county who must meet the challenges of Sacramento's mandates. The reality is San Diego County will be forced to curtail its public health and human services programs if Sacramento burglarizes the revenue that sustains these programs. I believe San Diegans are aware of this money grab and oppose it. This message is being carried to Sacramento, where I believe real action will begin closing a spending deficit estimated between \$26 billion and \$36 billion.

But does the lack of confidence in Sacramento carry over to local government? I don't believe so. This Board of Supervi-

sors has demonstrated its commitment to the people of this county. We are recognized for our innovation, fiscal prudence and wise decision-making.

And I don't believe San Diegans are as prone to the economic jitters that plague Northern California, especially Silicone Valley.

Consider these facts: Venture capital - money that speculates on whether a firm will have that next revolutionary breakthrough - declined significantly in the second half of last year. Yet while the rest of the nation was down 50%, it declined only 30% in this county. Venture capitalists believe in the innovations and technologies being developed in San Diego County. That 20% difference funds many of the region's exciting hi-tech and bio-technology companies.

Another good barometer of economic health is tourism. And there again, San Diego shines. While tourism's golden dollars diminished about 3 percent nationwide, San Diego saw its share grow, placing it third among the Top 25 markets.



Hotel occupancy here declined slightly to 68.4%, vs. the nationwide average of 59%. Even though there was a miniscule dip, San Diego's room rates shot up!

These statistics

reinforce what I believe is happening in our economy - San Diego County's diversity allows it to better weather these economic down swings.

This county dominates the world in diverse product lines, from the golf clubs swung by Tiger Woods to the cancer and AIDS breakthroughs at UCSD.

Statistically speaking, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else in the world!



*San Diego County
disposes of about
3.3 million tons of
waste annually.*

Landfills Are In the Dumps Over Space

While San Diego County remains a recognized leader in recycling, the region's landfills are nearing their capacity. This reality means San Diego County needs to expand its current sites and open a new landfill relatively soon.

San Diego County disposes of about 3.3 million tons of waste annually.

The County of San Diego, along with the 18 cities in this region, is required by the state to submit by the end of the year a detailed report on how refuse will be disposed of for the next five years. This state mandate repeats itself every five years.

Here is the latest:

- Miramar, operated by the City of San Diego, will max out within 10 years.
- Sycamore Canyon near Santee, owned

and operated by Allied Waste, will fill up by 2017. Plans are being reviewed to expand this site without increasing its overall size.

- Otay, south of Chula Vista, has enough space to last until 2027.
- Two smaller landfills in Ramona and Borrego Springs will reach capacity in 2006 and 2040, respectively.

Another location is Gregory Canyon, a proposed 308-acre landfill that is part of a 1,770-acre site 3 miles east of Interstate 15 near Pala. If it becomes operational it will handle 1 million tons of solid waste annually for the next 30 years. County voters in 1994 passed a measure creating the new landfill, taking the decision out of the control of the Board of Supervisors.

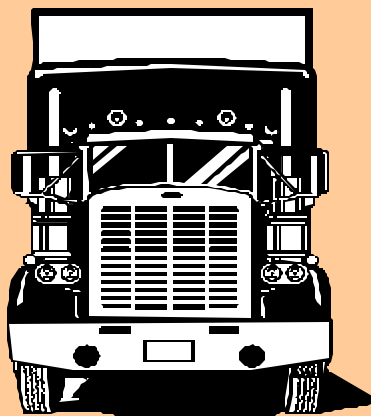
Killer Seaweed Efforts Gains Vital Funding

It's scientific name is *Caulerpa taxifolia* but it is better known as killer seaweed, an algae that smothers everything in sight as it desecrates lagoons and lakes.

And North County's Agua Hedionda Lagoon was *Caulerpa taxifolia's* next target. But the effort to eradicate the algae is gaining in strength, too, so that it does not infest San Diego County's other lagoons.

The Coastal Conservancy has awarded a \$1.3 million grant to the Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation to continue monitoring and eradicating the algae. And Assemblyman Mark Wyland, R-74th District, has authored legislation on the behalf of the cities of Encinitas and Carlsbad seeking \$1.1 million through the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water and Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002.

Caulerpa taxifolia was discovered in the Carlsbad lagoon and in Huntington Harbor. In both instances it is believed hobbyists dumped the plant into the waterways. It has no known natural enemies.



Update On Big Rigs' Safety Debate

Movement of product - everything from produce to new cars, from food stuffs to machinery - is vital to a region's success. However, the transportation of such products on our highways and roadways must be done with public safety as the No. 1 concern. In early February, the state Senate's hearings on highway-safety reform

turned confrontational as representatives of the trucking industry debated with officials from Caltrans about the future of routes for overweight and oversized loads.

The hearings were called following the tragic death of a Garden Grove motorist who was crushed when an oversized big rig failed to clear a bridge by 3 inches. The load struck the bridge and fell on top of the motorist's vehicle. Thirty such incidents occurred between 1996 and 2000, according to highway safety records. Interstate 5 in North County had back-to-back incidents in the 1980s.

A new computerized tracking system is being developed for Caltrans so that such incidents do not happen again. It is imperative that our highways are safe from these tragic accidents. On any given week, there are 23,000 truckers moving product in California. They deserve freeways that are safe for their operations; more important, the millions of drivers deserve a system that is designed for the safety of all Californians.

When Officials Talk, Good Things Can Happen

Does this scenario sound familiar? Elected officials in one city refuse to cooperate with their counterparts in neighboring cities because they don't want to deal with "their" traffic. Or one city opposes another's land-use plans. Or one municipality cannot get another to agree on open space easements.

Was your guess your city here in San Diego County? Good try, but this scenario involves three cities in south Ventura County. Elected leaders from Moorpark, Thousand Oaks and Simi Valley are looking to form a coalition so they can resolve the time-consuming issues that pitch one municipality against another. A second focus of their effort is to jointly lobby for the state to improve the freeway system their residents all use.

Instead of approaching these contentious issues from a confrontational perspective, these elected leaders agree to put aside previous prejudices and look for solutions of "mutual interest and concern."

Citing former President Ronald Rea-



gan, these officials agreed that "Whenever you can get people to sit down cooperatively to talk about issues, there's nothing you can't accomplish as long as no one worries about who gets the credit."

This is leadership, plain and simple. They realize there is a greater good to be gained by teaming together and, as one quipped, checking their egos at the door.

This scenario can and should play out over and over again throughout North County. This is the model for the transportation coalition I work with to develop new, logical, cost-effective transportation corridors linking inland North County.

Every elected official must realize the current economic climate means we must work cooperatively. Opening and maintaining dialogues is the only way we will be able to meet the challenges before us.

Some people decry this regional approach to problem-solving. Yet, when the physical improvements are made, when the roads adequately and quickly move traffic, when people visit parks and open space set aside for their enjoyment, when planners cooperate so that housing improves, versus devalues, a community, we all win.

The question is not whether elected officials can work together to solve mutual problems, but rather when will they embrace this opportunity. Leadership is working together to improve all lives.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

COMMUNITY FUNDS EARMARKED

Two more organizations in February received support from the Third District Community Project Budget. Four thousand dollars was earmarked to the La Jolla Town Council to update and expand its website that is used to promote and attract tourists to the seaside community. Twenty thousand dollars was distributed to the San Diego Performing Arts League for its BRAVO San Diego series.

RIVER WALK BEGINS ITS JOURNEY

Construction of a walking trail bordering the San Dieguito River is under way following a dedication ceremony marking the long-awaited occasion. The project will eventually connect to the Coast to Crest Trail and is being funded primarily through a \$105,000 federal grant.

NEW FACE AT DEL MAR FAIR BOARD

Russell Penniman of Rancho Santa Fe has been appointed to the Del Mar Fair Board, which oversees the state facility. Gov. Gray Davis made the appointment. Penniman, 45, is a former Navy fighter pilot and partner of Penniman and Associates.

ACTIONS OF NOTE

Even as reservoirs soaked up the benefits of February's near-record rainfall and early March rain, the future of San Diego County's water supply was at the forefront of the Board of Supervisors. The board directed staff to research the region's supply of ground water and see how growth will affect its use.

Supervisors also:

- Earmarked \$2.68 million for the county's participation in California's trauma care facilities. The funding is for the period July 1, 2002 to June 20, 2003. Trauma is the leading cause of death for those age 34 and younger.
- Accepted federal funding for HIV/AIDS-related

health-care services. Funding includes \$11.48 million to treat victims of HIV and AIDS from March 1, 2003 to Feb. 29, 2004; and \$852,000 for HIV-related services for the period April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004. The county contracts with community-based providers to provide services to about 3,500 victims.

- Modified the structure of the county's fire mitigation fees. The last revisions were made in 1969. The fee changes strengthened the inspection process while insuring the costs are based on the services provided.
- Voted to support an effort to relocate the Granite House, a historic structure in Santee.
- Agreed to fund \$225,000 for a new community library on a 10-acre Alpine property that will include room for the Wildlife Research Institute.

Concerning land use, supervisors:

- Accepted the donation of four additional electric vehicles that will be used by staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Approved funding for 200 road projects based on the potential for damage due to severe weather generated by the El Nino conditions.

The staff of Supervisor Pam Slater

John Weil, Chief of Staff

Sachiko Kohatsu (Land Use)

Danae Ramirez (Health and Social Services)

Jim Gonsalves (Housing)

Todd Voorhees (Budget and Finance)

Joe Sheffo (Public Safety)

Anne-Marie Jewel (Scheduling)

Frances Porter (Receptionist)

Dennis C. Lhota (Newsletter)

Contact us at (619) 531-5533 or write us at:
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335, San Diego, CA 92101

Check out our website at www.pamslater.com